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Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Dear Ms. Davis,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* have served as the basis for all Federal nutrition policies and nutrition education programs and have been reviewed and published six times since 1980. Every revision has included guidance about beverage alcohol. Some dietary guidance statements have been substantially revised and edited as nutritional science has evolved. The dietary guideline statement about beverage alcohol has remained essentially unchanged except for altering the wording from "alcohol" to "alcoholic beverages". The supporting messages regarding the potential health risks and benefits of beverage alcohol have become more specific and tailored as evidence has accrued.

The definition of "moderate" drinking for men and women (1-2 drinks per day) nor the definition of a standard drink have changed since they were first introduced more than 20 years ago.

As a health professional, I believe it's important to educate the public about what a standard drink means. Such efforts would help to ensure adults who choose to drink, do so in moderation and responsibly. Knowledge of what makes up a standard drinks would help consumers to better understand how to follow the alcohol guideline. Current definition of a standard drink (one drink is defined as 12 fl. oz of regular beer, 5 fl oz. of wine (12 percent alcohol), 1.5 fl oz of 80-proof distilled spirits) would be clearer if it consumers also understood that each of these standard drinks contains the same amount in of alcohol-0.6 fluid ounces. I find among patients that this concept is not well understood.

The clearest information to help consumers understand and make responsible choices about beverage alcohol should include the following information:

A standard drink consists of:

- 12 fluid ounces of regular beer (5 percent alcohol)
 - 5 fluid ounces of wine
 - 1.5 fluid ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (40 percent alcohol).
- Each standard drink contains 0.6 fluid ounces of alcohol

As a health care provider and educator I believe that nutrition education must include discussions about beverage alcohol consumption from both a caloric and health perspective. Moderate beverage alcohol consumption is defined by Dietary Guidelines for more than twenty years and should not be avoided as topic of discussion by health professionals.

Addressing the topic of beverage alcohol by healthcare providers will lead to better awareness and knowledge of potential benefits and harms. This same education and increased knowledge will provide more opportunities for needed interventions including behavior modification.

Thank you for your considering my comments.

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